

U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
Western District of New York

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PRESS RELEASE

February 10, 2005

RE: LABORERS LOCAL 91- UNITED STATES v. ROBERT ALEKS

United States Attorney Michael A. Battle announced today that a fifth former member of Laborers Local 91, based in Niagara Falls, New York, has now been convicted for illegal activities following a guilty plea before the Honorable Richard J. Arcara, United States District Judge.

ROBERT ALEKS, age 61, of Lewiston, New York, admitted in court to committing perjury during the investigation by the federal Grand Jury into acts of extortion committed by fellow members of Local 91. As part of his guilty plea, ALEKS admitted that he not only lied about his knowledge of certain acts of intimidation committed by Local 91 members upon the non-union asbestos company Sansla, Inc., ALEKS helped intimidate the employees of the company along with other members of Local 91. The charge of conviction is a violation of Title 18, United

States Code, Section 1623(a), and carries a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, a fine of \$250,000.00, or both.

Assistant U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr., who, along with Assistant U.S. Attorney Brett Harvey, is handling the continuing aspects of the case, stated that the charges arose from a lengthy criminal investigation of Laborers International Union of America, Local 91 (hereinafter "Local 91"), based in Niagara Falls, New York. To date, 16 Local 91 officers and members have been charged with either racketeering, extortion, violence, or perjury, in connection with what the Grand Jury said consisted of a violent scheme to extort jobs, from union and non-union contractors and employees, at various construction projects in Niagara County, New York. The Indictment in this case said that the pattern of violence occurred over a six year period of time.

Hochul stated that one of the defendants, Brian Perry, was convicted of racketeering pursuant to a guilty plea on June 9, 2004. James McKeown pleaded guilty to destruction of a motor vehicle on October 1, 2004. Steven Markle and Anthony Cerrone were convicted following a jury trial of attempted extortion on January 21, 2005. Defendant, Michael "Butch" Quarcini,

meanwhile, died prior to trial. Nine other defendants are awaiting trials scheduled to begin in September.

Michael A. Battle, United States Attorney, declared that this conviction represents another important step towards cleaning up the violence which for too long plagued construction job sites and picket lines in Niagara County. Mr. Battle noted that the conviction in this case sends an unmistakable message that lying during any federal investigation, particularly an investigation into acts of violence will not be tolerated.

Peter Ahearn, Special Agent in Charge of the Buffalo Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, stated that the Local 91 prosecution remains one of the most important matters being pursued by his agency.

The prosecution of the members of Laborers Local 91 was the culmination of a joint investigation on the part of the United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General; Office of Racketeering and Fraud Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge John McGlynn; the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Peter Ahearn; the New York State Police, under the direction of Major Michael McManus; the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, under

the direction of Sheriff Thomas Beilein; and the Niagara Falls Police Department, under the direction of Chief of Police John Chella.

Sentencing for Mr. Aleks is scheduled for May 26, 2005, at 12:30 p.m. in front of United States District Judge Arcara.